

Message Text

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TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 271 - MARCH 11, 1977

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. ISRAEL. THE ISRAELI PRESS HAS REACTED WITH SHOCK AND APPREHENSION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF SOME GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS TO FIND REDEEMING FEATURES. HAARETZ REPORTS THAT "SENIOR JERUSALEM SOURCES ARE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENTS... THEY DEFINED PRESIDENT CARTER'S FORMULA AS THE REVIVAL OF THE ROGERS PLAN." COMMENTATOR MARGALIT WRITES THAT "CARTER SEEMS TO HAVE COMBINED THE ROGERS PLAN WITH THE BROOKINGS DOCUMENT."

2. JERUSALEM POST DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT DAVID LANDAU STATES THAT "HIGHLY PLACED OBSERVERS...RECOGNIZED RUE-
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FULLY THAT CARTER WAS CALLING FOR ISRAEL ULTIMATELY TO SHRINK MORE OR LESS TO ITS PRE-1967 SIZE," BUT "WHAT WAS NEW--AND FAVORABLE FROM ISRAEL'S VIEWPOINT--WAS

THE PRESIDENT'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN LEGAL BORDERS AND DEFENSE LINES AND HIS STATEMENT THAT THERE MAY BE EXTENSIONS

OF ISRAELI DEFENSE CAPABILITY BEYOND THE PERMANENT AND RECOGNIZED BORDERS." THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT "AMOUNTED IN EFFECT TO A DETAILED BLUEPRINT OF HOW HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE EVENTS SHAPING UP IN THIS REGION IN THE YEARS AHEAD. AS SUCH, IT MARKS A WATERSHED IN THE HISTORY OF WASHINGTON'S DIPLOMATIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE AREA."

3. DAVAR COMMENTATOR BARNEA OBSERVES THAT "ISRAELI SOURCES HAVE BEEN STUNNED BY THE FACT THAT CARTER HAS DECIDED TO SPEAK OUT AT THIS PRESENT STAGE ON THE COMPONENTS OF THE OVERALL ACCORD...FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, CARTER HAS ADOPTED THE ARAB STAND ON THE SIZE OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IN THE CONTEXT OF AN OVERALL AGREEMENT."

4. YEDIOT; THE SECOND LARGEST NEWSPAPER IN ISRAEL, EDITORIALY DESCRIBED THE STATEMENT AS A "TRAGEDY." MAARIV, THE LARGEST NEWSPAPER IN ISRAEL, DESCRIBES THE STATEMENT AS "A DANGEROUS PLAN," ADDING: "CARTER IS AN HONEST MAN. HE HAS MADE IT CLEAR HIS ADMINISTRATION STICKS TO THE ROGERS PLAN...NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE AMERICAN PLAN DOES NOT SATISFY EVEN ISRAEL'S MINIMUM DEMANDS. FURTHERMORE, MAKING IT PUBLIC ON THE EVE OF RESUMED DIPLOMATIC MOMENTUM IN THE AREA CONTAINS GREAT DANGERS FOR THE VERY CHANCE OF NEGOTIATION. THE CARTER PLAN RISKS ENCOURAGING ARAB IRRESPONSIBILITY." (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

5. WEST BANK. THE MARCH 9 DEMONSTRATIONS IN RAMALLAH INVOLVING 400 PALESTINIAN STUDENTS, IN WHICH 21 PERSONS WERE INJURED, WAS THE LARGEST OUTBREAK ON THE WEST BANK

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SINCE THE DISORDERS OF LAST AUTUMN. RECENT TROUBLES IN SEVERAL TOWNS ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO DISCONTENT OVER THE TREATMENT OF ARAB PRISONERS HELD IN SPECIAL ISRAELI JAILS ON SECURITY CHARGES. FURTHER DISORDERS CAN BE EXPECTED AS A RESULT OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN AREAS OF MORE FUNDAMENTAL CONCERN--THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS, THE EXPROPRIATION OF ARAB LAND, AND THE CONTINUATION OF THE OCCUPATION--OR BY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PEACE PROCESS WIDELY REGARDED AS HARMFUL TO PALESTINIAN INTERESTS. (CONFIDENTIAL)

6. PALESTINIANS. THE PLO'S OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN, ABU MAYZAR, CATEGORICALLY DENIED YESTERDAY THAT THE PNC--SCHEDULED TO CONVENE TOMORROW IN CAIRO--WOULD AMEND THE PALESTINE NATIONAL CHARTER, ADDING THAT THE SUBJECT WOULD NOT EVEN BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING.

7. A 36-MEMBER DELEGATION WILL REPRESENT PALESTINIAN RESIDENTS OF THE WEST BANK AND JORDAN AT THE PNC SESSION.

NONE OF THE DELEGATION ARE CURRENTLY RESIDENTS OF THE WEST BANK, ALTHOUGH A LARGE NUMBER HAVE BEEN EXPELLED FROM THERE BY THE ISRAELIS SINCE THE 1967 WAR. EMBASSY AMMAN COMMENTED THAT LOCAL OBSERVERS VIEW THE DELEGATION AS LARGELY NOVICES WHO WILL LIKELY FOLLOW THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE CURRENT PLO LEADERSHIP. (CONFIDENTIAL)

8. LEBANON. PALESTINIAN-CHRISTIAN CLASHES IN SOUTH LEBAN. HAVE DECREASED CONSIDERABLY OVER THE PAST TWO DAYS. THE BATTLE FOR NABATIYA BETWEEN THE PRO-SYRIAN SAIQA AND THE REJECTIONIST PALESTINIANS LAST WEEKEND APPEARS TO HAVE RESULTED IN THE DEFEAT OF THE REJECTIONISTS IN THAT AREA. THE REJECTIONISTS REPORTEDLY SUFFERED MANY KILLED AND WOUNDED, AND THERE WERE ALSO NUMEROUS CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. SYRIAN TROOPS IN SAIQA UNIFORMS WERE SAID TO HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN THE BATTLE.

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9. EMBASSY TEL AVIV HAS REPORTED ON AN IDF INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING OF OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE ABOUT THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. THE ISRAELIS DID NOT REFER TO THE PRESENCE OF REGULAR SYRIAN SOLDIERS IN THE NABATIYA REGION DISGUISED AS SAIQA. IF THE ISRAELIS ARE TRULY UNAWARE OF THIS REPORTED SYRIAN MOVE, EMBASSY TEL AVIV BELIEVES THEY COULD REACT MILITARILY OR PERHAPS INSPIRE THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS TO STRIKE AT THE SYRIAN TROOPS ONCE THEY LEARN WHAT THE SYRIANS ARE DOING.

10. IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, THE ISRAELIS HAVE OFTEN LOOKED THE OTHER WAY WHEN THE SYRIANS USED SAIQA UNIFORMS. (LAST SPRING, SYRIA MOVED TWO BATTALIONS OF COMMANDOS INTO BEIRUT IN THIS WAY; THE ISRAELIS IGNORED THE MOVE WHILE CONTINUING TO EXPRESS THEIR OPPOSITION TO SYRIAN TROOPS IN BEIRUT.) BEFORE INITIATING ANY UNILATERAL ACTION, WE WOULD EXPECT THE ISRAELIS TO CONTACT US IN AN EFFORT TO RESOLVE THE SITUATION. (SECRET)

11. EGYPT. EGYPTIAN UN REPRESENTATIVE MEGUID TOLD AMBASSADOR YOUNG THAT EGYPT'S "MAIN CONCERN" AT PRESENT WAS ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. HE SAID THAT THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE AND ISRAELI OIL DRILLING IN THE SINAI "MIGHT COMPEL EGYPT TO ASK FOR A SPECIAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING." THE EGYPTIANS HAD PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED SIMILAR CONCERNS AND HAD ALSO HINTED AT A CALL FOR A SPECIAL SECURITY COUNCIL SESSION. (CONFIDENTIAL)

12. JORDAN. THE ISRAELI DAILY YEDIOT AHRANOT, QUOTING "HIGH RANKING ARAB SOURCES IN JORDAN", CLAIMED THAT KING

HUSSEIN'S STATUS IN JORDAN HAS BEEN DETERIORATING RAPIDLY OF LATE". THE PAPER'S SOURCES SAID THAT A TANGIBLE OPPOSITION IS FORMING AROUND CROWN PRINCE HASSAN AND THE QUEEN MOTHER AND THAT THE KING'S OVERTHROW IS "MERELY A MATTER OF TIME". ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS

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RECENTLY OF KING HUSSEIN'S REMOVAL OR ABDICATION, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE KING FACES SERIOUS JEOPARDY TO HIS RULE AT THIS TIME. (SECRET/NOFORN)

13. SYRIA. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE OF THE US DEFENSE ATTACHE IN DAMASCUS SOVIET FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS ARE NO LONGER SERVING WITH SYRIAN AIR FORCE SQUADRONS. AS A RESULT, DAMASCUS IS ATTEMPTING TO FIND ALTERNATE TRAINING PROGRAMS IN THE WEST SINCE SYRIAN AIR FORCE PERSONNEL ARE NO LONGER BEING TRAINED IN THE SOVIET UNION. THE COMMANDER OF THE AIR FORCE AND HIS CHIEF-OF-STAFF BOTH RECEIVED FLIGHT TRAINING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM IN THE 1950'S. THIS FACT LENDS CREDENCE TO THE REPORT THAT THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN DAMASCUS IS PROVIDING THE SYRIANS INFORMATION REGARDING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND COURSES IN THE UK.

14. DAMASCUS HAS TAKEN STEPS TO REDUCE ITS DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIET UNION BY NOT REPLACING SOVIET ADVISORS WHEN THEIR TOURS END. AT THE SAME TIME, SOVIET PILOTS REPORTEDLY CONTINUE TO FLY SOME AIRCRAFT. WHETHER THESE PILOTS ARE FUNCTIONING IN A TRAINING ROLE, OR ARE SIMPLY MAINTAINING THEIR OWN PROFICIENCY IS NOT CLEAR. IN ANY CASE, THERE ARE STILL BETWEEN 1,800 AND 2,000 SOVIET ADVISORS AND TECHNICIANS IN SYRIA. (SECRET/NOFORN)

15. KUWAIT. THE EMIR IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN HOME FROM

LONDON NEXT WEEK AFTER NEARLY FOUR MONTHS OF VACATION AND MEDICAL CONVALESCENCE. THE KUWAITI RULER SUFFERED TWO SLIGHT "HEART ATTACKS" IN LATE DECEMBER BUT HAS APPARENTLY RECOVERED.

16. THE EMIR'S CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEMS HAVE REKINDLED SPECULATION IN KUWAIT THAT HE MAY ABDICATE. THE

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IMMEDIATE SUCCESSION IS WELL ESTABLISHED. CROWN PRINCE

JABIR AL-AHMAD, ALREADY A PRINCIPAL POLICY MAKER AS
PRIME MINISTER, WOULD TAKE OVER. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A
HEATED DISPUTE WITHIN THE RULING FAMILY OVER WHO COULD
BECOME THE NEW CROWN PRINCE. THE EMIR IS NOT LIKELY
TO STEP ASIDE UNTIL THAT PROBLEM IS SETTLED. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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